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Journalist killing Smugglers racket involved, says CID

By Staff Correspondent
A smugglers racket in Jessore was involved in the killing of journalist Shamsur Rahman, CID sources said. The CID team probing the killing is now trying to ascertain if other elements were also linked with the rackets led by one Hasan. Abdus Sukkur, who was arrested earlier in connection with the incident on July 16, confessed that he had ordered the killing of the journalist. He had also deployed a watch man on the street in front of Rahman's office where he was killed, the sources said. Two members of Hasan group—Jahid and Shahidul—were arrested from Sahajbagh. See page 12 col 7

Dhaka ignored WHO alert on dengue epidemic

By Staff Correspondent
A large number of dengue fever cases in the country escaped detection in the absence of proper diagnostic facilities, revealed a study jointly conducted by the Institute of Epidemiology, Disease Control and Research (IEDCR) and the Armed Forces Research Institute of Medical Sciences (AFRIMS). Mixed infection or the presence of more than one kind of virus in blood—out of the four types which cause dengue fever—has the potential for dengue hemorrhagic fever (DHF) epidemics, said the study, the last of its kind in the country. The study carried out in Chittagong covered 253 children under 15 years of age during the period September 1996 to June 1997. It noted that a good number of cases usually termed common 'viral flu' may be dengue fever cases and that the country has every chance of an epidemic of the disease as in some neighbouring countries. A WHO report on dengue situation since 1995 said that a high percentage of the population. See page 11 col 5

Ctg killings Solaiman sent to jt interrogation cell in Dhaka

From Staff Correspondent
CHITTAGONG, July 26: CID police today sent Md Solaiman, alleged member of the gang involved in Bahaddarhat carnage of July 12, to Dhaka for questioning at joint interrogation cell. Solaiman was taken on seven days' remand for questioning after his arrest from Banskhali few days ago. Police raided several places last night to arrest six other members of the gang allegedly involved in the carnage in which 8 people including six BCL activists killed, police said. However, hunt for other killers was also on, police added.

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July	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
July 27	5:26 am	6:44 pm
July 28	5:26 am	

Prayer Timings
July 27

	Azhan	Jamaat
Fajr	4:25	4:55
Zohr	1:00	1:30
Asr	5:00	5:15
Maghrib	6:55	6:58
Esha	8:15	8:45

Source: Islamic Foundation

Bibiyana has a massive reserve of 6 TCF gas

By Sharier Khan
US company Unocal has confirmed that Bibiyana gasfield has a reserve of five to six trillion cubic feet of gas, which is at least half of Bangladesh's total proven gas reserve till now, said a highly placed source in Petrobangla. In a technical report, Unocal said while Bibiyana gasfield could produce 700 million cubic feet of gas per day (mmcf) after its development, Bangladesh's gas market is too small to justify developing the field. The country now consumes 1000 mmcf of gas. The company said that unless the market for Bibiyana gas was ensured, it would not go for development of the gas field, which typically means drilling of production wells, setting up a gas processing plant and pipelines to transmit gas to the National Grid. But Petrobangla sees no problem for Unocal to develop the gasfield. "We have a lot of high profile power and other projects in our pipeline. Within a couple of years, our demand would go up dramatically," the Petrobangla source asserted. "If Unocal starts to develop Bibiyana gasfield now, it would take at least three years to complete the scheme. By that time, our demand would rise to about 1700 mmcf. For the sake of smooth supply of gas to private power plant operators, we always should have surplus gas in our system." He went on, "Power plant operators like AES or Cement company operators like Lafarge would not accept a situation in which Petrobangla fails to supply gas. Besides, these gas buyers would pay Petrobangla in dollars. The agreed price is also good—2.4 US dollars per thousand cubic feet or one unit of gas—which is another good news for us." Petrobangla does not have any contractual obligation to buy Bibiyana gas. The gas field is located in Block 12. Unocal has Gas Purchase Sales Agreement (GPSA) for blocks 13 and 14, under which Petrobangla has to purchase a certain quantum of gas from Jalalabad gas field and pay in dollars. "Actually that is why Unocal is so much concerned," one source noted. The company would present its technical report at Petrobangla on Monday. Unocal and the original operator for Block 12—Occidental—struck gas in Bibiyana three years ago. The two companies then went for a three dimen- See page 11 col 8

Second bomb defused: Hunt for 'Afghanistan trained extremist'

By Special Correspondent
Army officers finally succeeded in 'defusing' the second bomb unearthed at Kotalipara in Gopalganj yesterday afternoon. A large army contingent from Jessore cantonment and from Dhaka comprising explosive experts, ordinance personnel and engineers led by Lt Col Mujib after four days of efforts, declared at around 2:30 pm that the explosive was 'dismantled'. Army sources said the device is to be taken to Jessore Cantonment and kept under observation to determine its chemical composition. The first device detected at Kotalipara is still "under serious observation", the sources added. Meanwhile, intelligence agencies continued their investigation to find out the clues relating to planting of the bombs. The agency said some important clues were emerging but those could not be disclosed now for the sake of investigation. "We took all precaution in defusing the explosive," Lt Col Mujib, Commanding Officer of Army Engineers Battalion based in Jessore, told newsmen at Kotalipara. Army men managed to pull out the device with rope from a safe distance. Already around 1000 sandbags were placed around the bomb as a precaution against detonation. Earlier, thousands of people in panic had deserted their homes within one square kilometre of the planted explosive. They now heaved a sigh of relief. Asked by newsmen why army sniffer dogs and metal detectors failed to detect both the explosives, Col Mujib said the bombs were buried more than one and a half feet under the ground and were covered with thick carbon papers. "Our Gopalganj Correspondent reports: Police yesterday recovered a motor bike and various documents suspected as belonging to a fundamentalist party members. They were recovered from the house of one Mufti Abdul Hannan at Hiran village. Police also arrested two persons—Magfer Kazi, a demonstrator at Bangabandhu University College and resident of Mja Para in Gopalganj town, at 8:30 last night and Sarwar Mjush, brother-in-law of Mufti Hannan, reportedly an Afghan trained person, yesterday noon. Meanwhile, eight people arrested earlier were placed on police remand for seven days. The total number of people arrested so far in connection with the planting of bombs is 15. A BSS report said police suspect that Harkatul Jihad, an extremist religious group, was behind planting of the bombs. See page 12 col 3



Army experts yesterday defused the second bomb found near the Kotalipara helipad in Gopalganj. — ISPR photo

Fiji coup leader George Speight arrested

SUVA, July 26: Fiji coup leader George Speight was arrested today with some of his aides on suspicion of arms offences and threats to the President, the military said, reports Reuters. Speight, who sparked a political crisis when he stood parliament in May taking most of the cabinet hostage, was stopped at a bridge checkpoint in Kolabu, 12 miles east of Suva, where scores of supporters have gathered. "There's a number of allegations that were being brought to us about the carriage of arms in and around Suva by George Speight and his bodyguards and about threats to the head of state," military spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Filipo Tarakinikini told Reuters. There were no details about the alleged threats to Fiji's head of state, ailing 79-year-old President Ratu Josefa Iloilo. The military earlier deployed troops across the racially split nation fearing renewed civil unrest after a new government and possibly a new prime minister is named tomorrow. Speight has threatened new unrest if his nationalist candidate for prime minister, 60-year-old diplomat, Adi Samanuu Cakobau, is not accepted in place of military-backed caretaker premier Laisenia Qarase. "The people could react," Speight earlier told Reuters at a school in Kolabu where about 100 of his supporters have gathered. Tarakinikini said five See page 11 col 5



Encroachers do brisk business by gobbling up a big chunk of Shitalakkhya river close to Katchpur bridge. — Star photo

JS committee condemns plot to kill Hasina

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Ministry at a meeting yesterday called for exploring new international markets to increase the country's exports, reports UNB. Held at its Jatiya Sangsad office, the meeting also discussed the role of Bangladesh in pursuing economic diplomacy in the new millennium. The meeting stressed the need for increasing necessary infrastructural facilities, including improvement of law and order and more coordination between Foreign, Finance, Home and Telecommunications ministries to attract foreign investments. The meeting strongly condemned the plot to assassinate the Prime Minister and demanded punishment to those involved in it after proper investigation. Chaired by committee chairman Dr Mohammad Selim, the meeting was attended, among others, by its members Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad, State Minister M Abul Hasan Chowdhury, H M Ershad, Nurul Islam Nahid, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Syed Ashraf Islam, Mariyam Begum and M Shamul Islam.

7 more garment factories sued for tax evasion

By Rafiq Hasan
Another seven garments factories have been sued by the National Board of Revenue (NBR) for evading payment of Tk 17.04 crore government revenue. NBR sources said the seven factories, imported around 51.63 lakh yards of fabrics worth Tk 26.25 crore and sold it in the open market. They imported those under bonded warehouse facilities without paying any duty. Bonded warehouse facilities are given for import of fabrics to manufacture apparels under back to back letters of credit (LCs). But the factory owners sold those in the open market, the sources said. A special customs squad formed by the NBR detected the duty evasion by the factories. With these seven, the number of garments factories involved in duty evasion rose to 14. They evaded payment of duty totalling Tk 49.95 crore. The customs authorities also filed criminal cases against all those factories. Some of the factory owners however are trying to get anticipatory bail from the court following the cases, sources said. Of the seven factories sued recently, five are located in Dhaka and two in Chittagong. The factories and their amounts of duty evasion are: Shim Garment Pvt. At 176 West Kairul, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka — Tk 3.22 crore; Biplab and Brothers at 19/5 Rasul Bagh, Mahakhali — Tk 6.83 crore; G N F Apparels at 44/6 Senpara Parbata, Mirpur — Tk 46.11 lakh; Arbatex Garments, 495 West Rampura — Tk 1.52 crore; United Excellent at 15/6 Rasul Bagh, Mahakhali — Tk 2.20 crore; US Garments at 75 Agrabad, Chittagong — Tk 1.57 crore and Ras Garments, 119 Amir Market, Khatunganj, Chittagong — Tk 1.24 crore. The customs authorities also temporarily suspended bonded warehouse facilities for the factories earlier detected for involvement in duty evasion of Tk 32.91 crore. The factories and their amounts of duty evasion are: Quality Fashion at Farbata, Mirpur — Tk 12 crore; Zeal Fashion at North Shahjahanpur — Tk 14.08 crore; Cherry Apparels Ltd at 334 Elephant Road, Hatirpool — Tk 82.97 lakh; Allure Apparel Ltd at Green Road Dhanmondi — Tk 97.54 lakh; Latest Garment Ltd at Postagala — Tk 1 crore and SR garment at Mirpur Tk 2.91 crore. The sources alleged that the factories could evade duty due to lack of proper maintenance of the bonded warehouses by the See page 11 col 8

Chittagong killings BNP changes policy towards Jamaat

By Rezaul Karim
BNP has finally changed its policy towards Jamaat-e-Islami on the issue of the recent Chittagong killing following "tremendous" pressure from the alliance partners. The policy shift became apparent when BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia at a rally in the city on Tuesday blasted the government for the countrywide crackdown on activists of Jamaat and its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir, which has been accused of carrying out the killings in Chittagong on July 12. The BNP chief, who is also the leader of the opposition in parliament, further said that the incident of killing in Chittagong was a result of bickering in ruling Awami League. Sources said BNP at a meeting on July 16 between Central Liaison Committee (CLC) and the leader of the opposition turned down a joint proposal made by Jamaat-e-Islami and Jatiya Party asking it to stand with Jamaat and resist the government's repression on the leaders and activists following the killing. They said BNP had earlier told Jamaat to make its position clear regarding the charges in the first place, ruling out the possibility of its getting involved in the issue soon. However, the insistent allies made the largest opposition party to rethink its policy, although the shift created mixed reaction in the party itself, the sources said. Leaders of the components of the four-party alliance claimed that the partners gave the message to BNP that it will risk isolation by not standing by Jamaat. See page 11 col 7

Environmentalists demand more attention to Pacific, coastal countries

From Syed Fahim Munaim
NADI (Fiji), July 26: The four-day joint congress of APFEJ and CEJA ended here with a call to pay more attention to the Pacific and coastal countries like Fiji, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Maldives, Mauritius and Bangladesh as climate change greatly affects the lives in those countries. The closing session was held at the Mocoabo hotel in the western resort town of Nadi, 210 km off capital Suva. John Pierre Vidon, the French Ambassador in Fiji, attended the closing session as special guest. The ambassador handed over "The International Green Pen Award-2000" to Adlai Amor for his outstanding contribution in the field of environmental journalism. Last year's award was given to Mahfiz Anam, Editor, The Daily Star. Presided over by Quamrul Chowdhury, chairman of CEJA, the joint congress approved the 11-point Fiji Declaration. APFEJ Chairman Dharman Wickremaratne, CEJA Secretary General Nina Ratulele, Bangladesh's Enayeturrah Khan, Syed Fahim Munaim, Zahurul Alam, Hasan Haliz, Japan's Rocco Hatakawa, USA's Adlai Amor, Nepal's Aditta See page 11 col 8

DCC in the dock Failure to control mosquito blamed for spread of dengue

By Naimul Haq
The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) has come under fire from city dwellers in the wake of widespread dengue fever. They blamed the prevalence of dengue fever on the DCC's failure to control mosquito menace. Even DCC officials have not spared their organisation, saying that a large portion of the corporation's funds to control mosquito menace is misappropriated every year. "Despite knowing well in advance that dengue infection is going to assume a serious proportion the officials concerned did not act," said one DCC official, preferring anonymity. "Dengue was never in DCC's agenda during high level meet- ings at the onset of this season although entomologists (experts on insects) and relevant scientists warned the DCC over the possible dengue outbreak." Residents alleged that spraying hardly takes place and cast doubt on proper utilisation of insecticides. The DCC allocated Tk 13 crore for the purpose last fiscal (1999-2000) and spent about Tk 42 lakh for purchase of various bug killer machines. It purchased Tk 5.2 crore adulticide for fogger machine. It also spent Tk 2.5 crore to purchase larvicide for spray by ultra low volume (ULV) spray machine and Tk 15 lakh for insecticide. See page 11 col 8

Security beefed up as PM goes to Gazipur today

GAZIPUR, July 26: Security has been beefed up here as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina arrives tomorrow to hand over Bangladesh Machine Tools Factory to the Army, reports UNB. Industries Minister Tofiq Ahmed and Chairman of Privatization Board Kazi Zafrullah will accompany the Prime Minister. As part of the security measures, a number of illegal structures were demolished in the town today.